# Chaplin Mayor.

*Die Martis Decimo Nono die* Februarii, 167$\frac{7}{8}$. *Annoque Regni Regis* Caroli *Secundi*, Angliæ, &c. *Tricesimo.*

THis Court doth desire Mr *Young* to Print his Sermon preached on Sunday Morning last, at the *Guild-hall* Chappel, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

*Wagstaff.*

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## IMPRIMATUR.

*Mar.* 4. 167$\frac{7}{8}$. *Guil. Jane*, R.P.D. *Henr.* Episc. *Lond.* à Sacris Dom.

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# SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

# The Lord Mayor

AND

# ALDERMEN

Of the CITY of

# LONDON,

AT

*GUILD-HALL* Chappel,

*February* 17th, 167⅞.

By *EDW. YOUNG*, Fellow of NEW COLLEDGE in *Oxford.*

*LONDON*,

Printed for *William Birch* at the Peacock in *Cheapside*, and *William Leach* at the Crown in *Cornhill*, 1678.

Edward Young L.L.D. afterwards Dean of Sarum

For an Account of Him and his Writings
See Gent: Mag: for Novr. 1791.

A

# Sermon Preached before the LORD MAYOR, &c.

*February the 17th, 167⅞.*

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PSALM 52. 7.

*Lo this is the man that took not God for his ſtrength, but truſted unto the multitude of his riches, and ſtrengthened himſelf in his wickedneſs.*

*Progreſs of Sin.*

IT is an Obſervation as true as common, that no man was ever extremely wicked upon a ſudden; a hardy ſinner muſt be a work of time, a Creature of induſtry and toil, of conflicts and repulſes: And that becauſe Nature, however depraved, has yet left ſuch ſtrong guards upon Vertue, that no man can break through them without doing violence not onely to his Reaſon, but his very Complexion too. It is no eaſie thing to overcome the ſhame that naturally attends all diſhoneſt actions, and makes

thoſe that commit them to love darkneſs. It is no eaſie thing to overcome the fear that naturally haunts the guilty conſcience, and makes darkneſs it ſelf to be no ſecurity: much leſs is it eaſie to dare to live at enmity with God, after conviction that he is all-knowing, and juſt, and his wrath a conſuming fire. And yet notwithſtanding all this, ſince wofull experience puts it out of queſtion that men do daily arrive at this deſperate pitch; that how dangerous ſoever the precipice be, thither they venture; and being there, bear their danger with leſs concern then others can behold it: It may be worth our while to enquire how, and by what degrees ſin thus advances; and as it advances, infatuates. The ſcheme is laid down in my Text; where, in the perſon of *Doeg*, we have the deſcription of a ſinner Conſummate; one that had fill'd up his meaſure, and was now ripe and overtaken with judgment. For the firſt words of the Verſe, *Lo this is the man*, point out his miſerable end, which, the Context will tell us, was *deſtruction and caſting out of the land of the living*. And the reſt of the words (on which I deſign chiefly to inſiſt) are his Character, exhibiting the wicked courſe of life which brought him to that miſerable end, (*viz.*) *He took not God*, &c.

The Character conſiſts of three Members, which

which are as it were the three Stations of the Broad way: The first being Alienation from God, the second Application to the World, the third Impiety profest. And these three are Consequential to each other, as well in the order of Nature, as of the Text.

I begin with the first Member of the Character, *He took not God for his strength.*

The order and importance of this Default will best appear, if we enquire into the true measures of humane nature; and see what strength she has in her self, and what she wants; and thence deduce the necessity of our dependence upon God.

From those that have searched into the state of humane nature, we have sometimes received very different and incompatible accounts; as though the Inquirers had not been so much learning, as fashioning the subject they had in hand; and that as arbitrarily as a Heathen Carver that could make either a God or a Tressel out of the same piece of wood. For some have cry'd down Nature into such a desperate impotency, as would render the Grace of God ineffectual; and others, on the contrary, have invested her with such power and self-sufficiency, as would render the Grace of God superfluous. The first of these Opinions wrongs Nature in

defect,

defect, by allowing her no ſtrength, which in conſequence muſt make men deſperate: The ſecond wrongs Nature in exceſs, by imputing too much ſtrength, which in effect muſt make men confident: And both of them do equally deſtroy the Reaſon of our application to God for ſtrength. For neither will the man that is well in conceit, nor yet the deſperate, apply himſelf to a Phyſician; becauſe the one cries there is no need, the other, there is no help. I preſume therefore that a more diſtinct view of theſe two extreme opinions may properly ſerve to guide us into the notice of the true ſtate of Nature, which lies between them both.

As for the firſt Opinion, which wrongs Nature in Defect, it was hatcht in the Heathen Schools upon this occaſion. The Philoſophers having conſidered the reproachfull nature of Sin, how that in it ſelf it was nothing but injury, turpitude, and folly; and in its effects, miſchief, inquietude, and ill-boding fears; concluded juſtly, that the Commiſſion of it was baſe and infamous, and that the deliberate choice of a ſinfull action was a greater reproach to Reaſon, then Reaſon was an ornament to Man. But nevertheleſs finding themſelves dipt in the common guilt, and too ſoft to reſiſt the pleaſing evil, but likewiſe too proud to own the reproach

of

of it; they ſet their wits on work to contrive an expedient, how a man might ſin, and yet not be in the fault, and ſo be able to keep his Crimes and Credit too. The expedient they contrived was this, to maintain, That Sin was no voluntary Act, but a meer forced one: and this they proved by two Mediums, Fate, and Matter; as each of them introducing a neceſſity upon humane actions. From the firſt they argued, That all humane actions were pre-determined by the irreſiſtible Power of an Eternal Decree, ſo that Man did not purely act any thing of himſelf, but was a meer paſſive Tool in the hand of Deſtiny. From the ſecond they argued, That though Man were allowed liberty of Acting, yet he could have no liberty of Choice, becauſe his Choice was always determined to the worſer ſide by a certain inſuperable malignity in matter, that is, by the pravity of his conſtitution. Upon either of theſe accounts it follow'd, that Man was a meer impotent ſlave, always overruled by force, either from without or within; and therefore ſince he could not poſſibly help what he did, why ſhould he be blamed for it? rather let the cauſes be blamed to which he owed his neceſſity. Thus did the Philoſophers endeavour to bring Mankind off from the ſcandal of their faults by impeaching

Nature, as an indulgent Jury will bring off a Murtherer by a *Non compos mentis.*

As to their Hypotheſis of the Irreſiſtible Decree, I ſhall ſpeak no more of it but this, that they who firſt broacht it, and therefore were moſt fond of it, found it clogg'd with ſo many ill conſequences, ſo reflecting upon the Deity, and of ſuch ill influence upon Manners, that though they were accounted the moſt pertinacious Sect of men in the world, they have left it honeſtly retracted. *Chryſippus* diſavows it in *Cicero* and *Gellius*; and the more modern Stoicks build all their Morals upon a clear contrary foundation: for Τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ὅτι φύσει ἐλεύθερα is their firſt Principle; that is, All mens internal actions are naturally free.

As for the Malignity of Matter, it was a Notion more tolerable among the Heathens, becauſe their errours about the Eternity and original Qualities of Matter were perhaps Invincible: but for Chriſtians to impute the ſame effects to the Corruption of our Nature by the Fall, as though we had thereby contracted ſuch a Complexional Neceſſity of ſinning, as neither Precept nor Caution, nor all the remedies that God has provided, could reſcue us from that Neceſſity; this is a great Calumny to Nature, and affront to God's goodneſs, and a meer

a meer crude Apology of ſuch as were firſt reſolved for a lazy indulgence to Vice. And yet this pretence is not unuſual; it is not unuſual to hear men confeſs their ſins in ſuch a ſubtle form, as though they were drawing Schemes of Sophiſtry againſt the Day of Judgment. "I "muſt not deny my ſins: (ſays the Man) The "righteous man falls ſeven times a day; We "dwell in a body of ſin; Our firſt Parent eat of "the forbidden Fruit, and ſo derived a Curſe "upon his unhappy Poſterity; *Homo ſum*, I "am a ſon of *Adam*, I need ſay no more to "ſpeak my guilt. And now what means ſuch a Confeſſion as this, but that the Man is willing to diſcharge the burthen of his Conſcience upon ſomething out of his own power; and to inſinuate that it is not will and choice, but force of conſtitution that makes us ſinners; that we are born with ſuch tainted principles, fleſh ſo ſtubborn, and appetites ſo impetuous, that neither Rule, nor Inſtitution, nor Endeavour, nor Grace it ſelf can regulate them; and that thereupon, as *Adam* urged againſt God for the firſt ſin committed, *The Woman that thou gaveſt me beguiled me, and I did eat*, ſo his Poſterity might urge for all that have been committed ſince, *The Nature that thou haſt allotted us has betrayed us, and we are ſinners?* Thus will

men dawb with *untempered mortar*, (in the Prophet's Allegory) *though the wall ſhall be caſt down, and they in the midſt of it.* For to aſſign the true meaſures of Nature in reference to Defect, I lay down this for the Fundamental Truth, That whatſoever there is either of impotence or poſitive malignity in our Natures, it is onely ſuch as is conſiſtent both with the Purity and Mercy of God: and therefore we may certainly conclude, that it cannot be ſo much as ſhall either adminiſter matter of excuſe to thoſe that will be bad, or argument of deſpair to thoſe that deſire to be good. We are born with propenſions to Vice, and appetites prone to cloſe with tempting Evils; but theſe are ſo far from being actually evil themſelves, that they are the very life of Vertue, and foundation of Reward. 'Tis true, they create difficulties in Vertue, and make the way rugged; but then God is pleaſed to conſider theſe difficulties indulgently; and for that very reaſon he admits man to terms of repentance and reconciliation: whereas the Angels, who were made of a purer nature, and leſs obnoxious to temptation, were allowed no ſuch remedy. But moreover theſe difficulties which our infirmity creates, are far from being inſuperable; we know our armour, and we are commanded to fight, and we are aſſured

assured of Victory: whatsoever of strength we have not in our selves, we know where to have supplied; and whatsoever those Excellencies are which we deplore as lost in the Fall, the Gospel assures us, that supervening Grace makes a full repair of them. Grace is new light to the understanding, and new power to the will, and new regularitie to the faculties that ought to obey, and a new harmony to our whole discomposed frame. In a word, Grace is more to us now in the state of corruption, then in the state of primitive perfection we could have been to our selves. Whosoever therefore shall consider the defects and impotence of our present state, together with the rich promises of God in Christ, I know nothing that he ought reasonably to argue or infer thence but this, that we now lie under a stricter obligation to live in a perpetual dependence upon God; that we have now a double tye to be Religious, that is, both to serve God, and our selves; forasmuch as our addresses do not more effectually pay him homage, then they do supply our own wants. God could give without asking, if it seemed good: but then perhaps we should be more apt to glory, as though we had not received: whereas to receive when we want, is the same thing in effect, as to have had it in store;

but with this advantage, that it makes us retain a greater veneration for the Donor; as a man is in greater probability to live humble and dutifull, when he has his livelihood conferred on him by daily diſpenſation, then if he had the whole in intire poſſeſſion. God could redintegrate Nature, if he thought good; and re-inſtate her in her original rights and powers: but then perhaps the man, who now in the ſtate of corruption attributes his vices to his Conſtitution, not to his Will, would, if he had been born with greater ſtrength and ſufficiency, have attributed the glory of his Vertue to his own conduct, and not unto God; and ſo had he had in him leſs of the ſin of the man, he would have had more of the ſin of *Lucifer*, that is, pride and affectation. 'Tis a wiſe Rule in all things of Providence to conclude, That that is beſt that now is: and queſtionleſs it could not be better with us then it is, notwithſtanding all the infirmities of our Nature, if we had but the happineſs to make ſuch uſe of them as God intends, that is, to fix our dependence and application more ſtrictly to himſelf.

I paſs in the ſecond place to the Notion of thoſe that exalt Nature above her due meaſures, and inveſt her with ſuch a ſelf-ſufficiency as would make the Grace of God appear ſuperfluous.

*Quid*

*Quid opus eſt Votis?* ſaith the Philoſopher; What need is there to pray? make thy ſelf a good man; 'tis idle to petition God for that which thou canſt beſtow upon thy ſelf. And many among Chriſtians (beſide *Pelagius*) ſeem to have conſulted the Philoſopher more then the Scriptures, for their method of inculcating Religion and a good life. They recommend Vertue in pompous harangues, and urge Religion from the rational Topicks of convenience and inconveniency; they diſplay the amiableneſs and advantages of Good, and the deformity and miſchiefs of Evil. "How ugly is "envy? how tormenting is revenge? how "brutal is drunkenneſs? how pernicious is "luſt? On the contrary, meekneſs, tempe-"rance and beneficence, how ſerene are they in "their ſtate, and how commodious in their ef-"fects? And needs a man now (ſay they) any "infuſion here to determine his choice? or a-"ny aſſiſting influence to put it in execution? "All that he ſeems to need is onely this, that he "do not turn fool, and deſert the uſe of thoſe "faculties and powers which Nature has given "him. After ſuch a Moral diſcourſe as this, having called upon Reaſon, and ſtirred up advertency to apply it, they preſume they have done enough, and leave us to grow good upon

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our own ſtock and ſtrength. But alas! theſe are *Icarus* his flights, Nature has provided no wings for Man to ſoar ſo high with. Vice will never be chas'd out of the world with Invectives, nor Vertue advanc'd to her Empire by Panegyricks. The moſt prudent advertency, and the moſt manly reſolution, the moſt rational love, and the moſt generous indignation that ever Opinionative Moralliſt could conceive and fortifie his breaſt withall, will never be able to ſecure a man againſt the ſubtle approaches or the violent aſſaults of ſin. 'Tis onely the Divine Aſſiſtence that is our caſtle and defence, and the vital ſpring of all our good habits; and whoſoever terminates his hopes, even of ſerving and pleaſing God, upon the confidence of any other ſtrength then what is derived from God, his hopes are impious, and he muſt miſcarry.

'Tis true, that Rational Arguments are proper, nay neceſſary to excite a man to his duty; which is a Rational ſervice, and effected by Rational endeavours, not lazy preſumptions: But then this is the point, A man muſt likewiſe know, that when he is about his duty, he is not ſufficient for that which he is about: for God has reſerved a partial agency to himſelf, and he does as much command our application

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to him for this assistence, as he does demand all the rest of our duty. For as God does require us to keep his Commandments, so in order to the doing of this, he does altogether as much require us to Ask, to Seek, and to Knock; that is, to apply our selves for ability to doe what he commands: and therefore he who shall undertake to reason and argue a man into his duty, without insisting on the necessary application to God, does the same thing in resemblance, as if he should cut off the Traveller's legs, and provide him with a staff. That one instance of S. *Peter* to our Saviour, *Matt.*26.*Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*, being as stout a Resolution, upon as good motives, and from as honest an heart, as any man else can ever dare to pretend to, has sufficiently baffled all humane confidence, and demonstrated that the opinion of strength in our selves is vanity, and the issue of it defeat.

Having thus adjusted the true measures of humane Nature, as consisting between the two extremes of self-sufficiency to Good, and absolute necessity to Evil; it results, that the not making God our strength (which in one word we may call Indevotion, *Doeg*'s first charge in my Text) is the great Parent Evil; an Evil

more prolifical in us then that of *Adam*: and if we will, with S. *Auguſtin*, attribute the Univerſal Origine of ſin to a Deficient Cauſe, it muſt be to this Defect of Application to God, as being the firſt, the inlet, and the cauſe of all others. For whatſoever inadvertencies a man may be guilty of before, it is impoſſible he ſhould fall under the dominion of any vicious habits, untill he has firſt fallen from this Guard of the Divine Aſſiſtence. But then on the other ſide, when a man has once by neglect fallen from this Guard; when either through deſuetude, or infrequency, or meer formality of devotion, he has ſuffered his mind to grow alienated from God, and his dependence upon him to diminiſh and fail; that man is then arrived to a pitch, where it is as impoſſible for him to ſtay, as it is to fix after the firſt ſtep down a Precipice: He muſt go on, and his next genuine advance is to the ſecond Member of *Doeg*'s Charge, (*viz.*) *He truſted in the multitude of his Riches.* For

The Soul of man, like common Nature, admits no *Vacuum*; if God be not there, Mammon muſt be; and it is as impoſſible to ſerve neither, as it is to ſerve both. And for this there is an eſſential reaſon in our conſtitution. For Man is deſigned and born an Indigent Creature,

ture, full of wants and appetites, and a reſtleſs deſire of happineſs, which he can by no means find within himſelf; and this indiſpenſably obliges him to ſeek for his happineſs abroad. Now if he ſeek his happineſs from God, he anſwers the very intention of his frame, and has made a wiſe choice of an object that is adequate to all his wants and deſires. But then if he does not ſeek his happineſs from God, he muſt neceſſarily ſeek it ſomewhere elſe; for his appetites cannot hang long undetermined, they are eager and muſt have their Quarry: *If he forſake the Fountain of Living waters, yet he cannot forſake his thirſt*; and therefore he lies under the neceſſity of *hewing out broken Ciſterns to himſelf*; he muſt purſue, and at leaſt promiſe himſelf ſatisfaction in other enjoyments. Thus when our Hope, our Truſt, and our Expectations abate towards God, they do not abate in themſelves, but are onely ſcattered among undue and inferiour Objects. And this makes the connexion infallible between Indevotion, and Moral Idolatry; that is, between the neglect of God's Worſhip, and worſhipping the Creature: for whatſoever ſhare we abate towards God, we always place upon ſomething elſe; and whatſoever thing elſe we proſecute with

that ſhare of love, deſire, or complacency, which is due unto God, that is in effect our Idol; as is expreſly declared in the caſe of Riches, *Col.* 3. 5. which is the particular matter I am to treat about in this ſecond part.

Riches are God's bleſſing, and the good man's promiſe, and adminiſter not onely the lawfull comforts to Nature, but the greateſt means and opportunities to Vertue: and yet the managery of them is ſo nice and hazardous, and they occaſionally produce ſo much of evil, that, as the Poets did therefore conclude them to come from Hell, ſo the Scriptures tell us in earneſt that they generally tend thither.

Not things themſelves, but affections and opinions about things are evil, ſays the Rule; and it being ſo in the preſent caſe, I ſhall briefly note ſome affections of men that thus pervert Riches into evil.

I ſhall mention three. { *Exceſs of Deſire.* / *Miſtake of Right.* / *And undue Complacency.*

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The first respects Riches in Prospect, the other two in Possession. I begin with Excess of Desire.

The Stoick's Wise man would have no Desire, for fear of Disappointment; but 'tis certain the Good man will have no great Desire, for fear of Impiety. For a great Desire can hardly be entertained without a secret quarrel with Providence, an unthankfulness for what is present, and a preference of our own wish before the good pleasure and ordination of God. When the *Israelites* desired a King, they desired no more then the completion of God's own promise to them; there was nothing sinfull in their desire, but the excess of it: it was come to this, *Nay, but we will have a King:* and then God sent them a King in his anger, and many infamous calamities during the whole course of his Reign. Nor was *Rachel*'s desire of Children any other then natural and just, till it came to this impatience, *Give me Children, or else I die*; and then God disappointed her with a Grant, and punisht her with her very wish; for she died in Child-bearing. *All things are lawfull for me,* (says the Apostle) *but I will not come under the power of any:* And so in like manner, the desire of all things is law-

full, while it is temperate, but an impetuous desire grows a Master in the Soul, it brings it under its power; and our freedom, and our reason, and our conscience too, must upon occasion submit to its Tyranny. Hence it comes to pass, that the desire of Riches does very often absolutely prophane the Soul, and turn the Temple of God into meer Shop and Exchange. When the man should be Religious, his thoughts are never at home; they are abroad in attendence upon the design in hand; and Mammon is the commanding object of all his value and devotion. God Almighty requires that the strongest breathings of our heart should, like the smoak of the Accepted Sacrifice, mount directly to Heaven; but the Covetous man's desire does, like the rejected smoak, incline all downwards, and spend it self upon the Earth. He is restless in contrivance, and hardy in pursuit; confident in attempts, and bold and importunate in addresses; and (what is worse) he looks upon sordid compliance, and base connivence, and all the acts of dissimulation and fraud, as onely provident methods of attaining his end. His thoughts being thus in full employ, and his imagination always busie, he lets time rowl over his head, without

making

making any reflexions worthy his immortal part; so that scarcely does the poor Emmet tug for a heap of earth with more toil or less Religion then he.

Thus does man in the first place vitiate Riches by Desire, and make them his sins before they are his. But if they come into possession, he vitiates them in the second place by Mistake of Right.

'Tis certain that the worldly man studies nothing so accurately as his Title to his Estate; and yet when all is done he mistakes it; for he counts himself a Proprietor, where he is but a Steward. For the good things of this life being by no means the Christians portion, God never consigns them to us into Property, but onely into Trust. They employ the Manager, and approve the Faithfull; but he that fails in his Accounts, will find that his Revenues are his Debts. 'Tis therefore the Wise man's care to make friends with the Mammon; to sow as he hopes to reap; to justifie his Expences, and to bless the Stock by thankfulness, temperance, and charity: But he that assumes more right then God has given, that is, he that takes what he has to be absolutely his own, the first Inference he makes is this, that he may doe with it what he

pleases;

pleaſes; that he may either ſpend it upon his own luxury, or hoard it up for that of his Heirs: and thus he eludes all the obligations of charity, and eſteems the caſting his bread upon the waters as great a folly in the Figure, as it is in the Letter. It was thus that *Dives* in the Parable had carved for himſelf, who when he petitioned for a drop of water to allay his torments, his mouth was ſtopped, and his petition rejected with this ſole Anſwer, *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime hadſt thy good things.* Queſtionleſs many a man has had his good things in his lifetime, and yet his ſhare after this life not a jot the leſs: But this was *Dives* his caſe, he took the good things of this life for his property, and his portion, and uſed them accordingly; and therefore it was that now he muſt expect no more.

The third Affection whereby a man vitiates his Riches is undue Complacency, which is an Acquieſcence of mind in the Object of enjoyment, or (in the Scripture expreſſion) *a ſetting our hearts upon it.*

A moderate Complacency or ſatisfaction in the good things of this world is requiſite to make a man thankfull, as a proportion of ſpirit is neceſſary to ſenſe: but an abſolute complacency,

placency, or reſt in them, is ( like a great exceſs of Spirits ) a very ſtupor and loſs of mind. The beſt rule about Riches is, to poſſeſs them as though we poſſeſſed them not; that is, to reſpect them with ſuch an equality of temper, as neither to place our happineſs in their preſence, nor our miſery in their loſs. But the worldly man poſſeſſes them ſo, that he is poſſeſt by them; they take in his heart, and then fill it ſo compleatly, that he is not ſenſible of any other hunger or deſire. How ſweetly does he ſing, Soul, take thy reſt, for I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing? How ſecurely does he ſleep, when his ſenſes drop tired from variety of diverſions, and lie lockt up in the fumes of agreeable juices? Do we think that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to ſuffer violence from ſuch a man? no, it is rather to be feared that he would count Heaven it ſelf a violence, and an overture of change would ſhock and diſguſt him. For what indeed ſhould he doe there, whoſe conceptions are wholly levelled to the pleaſures of ſenſe, of wines and meats, and their wanton conſequences; and who is no more apprehenſive of immaterial joys, then the groſſeſt Brute is of Muſick or Picture? And here I limit the

ſecond ſtation of the Broad way, that is, *Doeg*'s ſecond charge, *He truſted in the multitude of his Riches.*

And now the ſinner being advanc'd thus far through the neglect of Piety, and love of the World, and finding his road gratefull, and the return tedious, and the viſage of repentance ſo auſtere, that if he put himſelf under her conduct, he muſt loſe all that he knows how to prize, that is, gayety and pleaſure, and perhaps riches too; and theſe thoughts making deeper impreſſions, then any thing future can, upon a mind whoſe reaſonings are now grown weak, and conſideration little; what can he reſolve but to go on? But becauſe to go on, and at the ſame time to look back, is diſtracting; becauſe reflexion upon guilt is a torment, and a cowardly ſinner is an inſufferable penance, he finds it neceſſary to take better courage; that is, in the words of my third part, to *ſtrengthen himſelf in his wickedneſs*: and thereupon he betakes himſelf to the two ſtrong holds of ſin, Debauchery and Atheiſm, and thence he bids defiance to Heaven. Like an ungratefull Subject, who after he has long abuſed his Prince, and his Crimes are grown ſo great that they

cannot

cannot be compounded on eaſie terms, and his ſtomach ſo haughty too, that he hates to ſtoop to due ſubmiſſion and allegeance, he draws his Sword and flings away the Scabbard, and reſolves to defend himſelf by a meditated Rebellion.

The firſt ſtrong hold that the Rebel Sinner betakes himſelf too is Debauchery, which, in its proper notion, is no more then an expreſs art againſt Thinking. To indulge Appetites and gratifie Senſes, to live ſoft and delicate according to the Scheme of ſtudied pleaſure, is the buſineſs of the Voluptuous; but the Debauchee is not ſo choice: For his end is not ſo much to pleaſe, as to amuze; and his whole ſtudy is onely for a courſe of expedients how to darken the mind, and divert thought, and fence out reflexion. His Wine is not to refreſh, but to drown; and therefore he drinks not like an Epicure, but rather like a *Spartan* Slave, when he drunk to bring drinking into diſgrace. His Diſcourſe is not for underſtanding, but for noiſe. Noiſe is good company and wit: and ſo with hurry and laughter, and any thing that is loud, he ſtifles the Remonſtrances of Reaſon, and murmurs of Conſcience, as Drum and Trumpet cover the Cries of a Battel. He

guards himſelf againſt the awe of Vertue, by an habitual contempt of the good; and ſecures himſelf againſt counſel, by a preventing deriſion of the ſerious. He hates every ſolemn act, if it be but a grace at his meal; leſt the remembrance of a God ſhould check his jollity, and bridle his exceſs. But then, if notwithſtanding all this art, his body chance to tire under the drudgery of Vice, and ſo he be overtaken with the Intervals of apprehenſive Thoughts, the laſt Refuge of his uneaſie and deſperate mind is Atheiſm. And queſtionleſs, how poor a Refuge ſoever Atheiſm be, it was never any other then a Refuge: it is an Opinion that was never offered by Reaſon, but always ſought for by Diſtreſs. And this without doubt is the reaſon why one age of Chriſtianity has produc'd more Atheiſts, then were ever known in the whole extent and duration of Heatheniſm; becauſe the Chriſtian lying under greater Convictions, and therefore ſtronger preſſures of Conſcience, muſt needs be more forcibly urg'd to fly to this Refuge, then the Heathen could be, whoſe knowledge of ſin and judgment being leſs, his fears muſt neceſſarily be ſo too. After the man has once reſolved upon Atheiſm, he does generally in the firſt place

ſwear

ſwear Fidelity to his Opinion; that is, he doth by familiar forms of Oaths and raving Imprecations inculcate to himſelf that God is nothing but a Mormoe or Bug-bear: and ſo he hardens himſelf in his pretence.

In the next place, he pronounces Religion a Trick, contrived by the Art of Princes, and conſerved by the Intereſt of Prieſts: that if ever any talkt wiſely about Religion, it is onely they who diſcard all particular poſitive Religions, and ſtick onely to that of Nature. But then what is Nature, or at leaſt the Interpreter of Nature, but common Uſage and Cuſtom? And what is it that we have not Cuſtom for? We have Cuſtom for all ſorts of Vices; we have Cuſtom for oppoſite Religions, and for no Religion: and ſo in fine from Nature can ariſe no Obligation at all.

In the next place, the Doctrine of Spirits is cried down as abſurd; and all the matters of fact that tend to aſſert their being, can obtain no more credit then *Lucian*'s raillery upon the inchanted Broomſtaff. But moſt of all abſurd, in his conceit, and unphiloſophical is the Doctrine of Immortal Souls. "For what do Souls act above the "power of ſubtile matter in the ſtate of U-

"nion? and how can they diſengage them-
"ſelves from common periſhing in the ſtate
"of diſſolution? The Beaſts approach very
"near us in our moſt wiſe and ſagacious o-
"perations, without the hazard of being Im-
"mortal; and why ſhould man fanſy that
"hazard to himſelf? No, we are born at
"all adventures; and we ſhall be as though
"we had never been; and our Spirits ſhall
"vaniſh into ſoft air. And now what can be done with a man of this perſwaſion? 'Tis to as little purpoſe to tell him of Hell and torments, as of *Charon* and *Cerberus*: All is *Par ſollicito Fabula ſomnio*, as his Minion Poet hath concluded it. And thus the Atheiſt is become as ſafe and impregnable, as in a Caſtle of Braſs.

But, alas the miſerable dream of peace that muſt awake into an Eternity of real evils! Alas the pitiable Reaſons that muſt be confuted by ſo ſad an Experiment! For as we have hitherto taken the proſpect of the Sinner's way, ſo my Text requires us to look a little farther, and advert his end. You have ſeen what the man was; he was gay and ſecure in his wickedneſs: but now, *Lo, this is the man*, this is his preſent ſtate; he is become a ſpectacle of vengeance, an object

object of terrour and of ſcorn, and pointed out for a warning to all that ſhall come after. Lo, this is the Man that had ſhipwreckt his Faith, and waſted his Conſcience, and corrupted his Mind, ſo that he had loſt the notices of what he ſhould do, as well as the care of what he did: But now his Miſeries have rectified his Notions; He believes and trembles; He ſees God again in the terrour of his Judgments; and is convinced by an eternal dying, that the Soul is ſubject to no other death. He now lies ſcourged with paſt enjoyments, and terrified with his preſent paſſions; His Wit and Parts groan under the Conviction of Folly, and his ſhame and anguiſh are conſummated by deſpair. But my Text onely points at this; nor is it my buſineſs to inſiſt upon it any farther. I have my end in minding you from the Example, That Sin and Judgment are inſeparably linkt together; That if we will eſcape *Doeg*'s end, we muſt avoid his way; That if we will reſiſt ſin ſucceſsfully, we muſt reſiſt it in its firſt Iſſues, and pluck up the roots of it, which in paſſing I have diſcovered.

And now that the moſt important of what I have ſaid, may be left more immediately upon

your

your thoughts, I ſhall ſumme it up into one ſentence, and conclude. The Leſſon that the whole Example does moſt genuinely teach us is this, That when a man once ceaſes to take God for his ſtrength, (which was *Doeg*'s firſt default) when he once neglects to apply himſelf to Heaven for conduct and ſupport, that man naturally falls from one ſin to another, and there is no ſecurity of ſtopping betwixt Indevotion and the Bottomleſſe Pit.

*From which the Divine Mercy prevent us.*

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FINIS.

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